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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001246

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TAGS: PREL PGOV OSCE EUN LO ZK UZ

SUBJECT: OSCE AMBASSADOR DEPARTING TASHKENT; GOU TO HOST OSCE LAND DEGRADATION CONFERENCE

REF: TASHKENT 1051

Classified By: CDA BRAD HANSON, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ambassador Miroslav Jenca told Charge that he plans to leave his post in September to take up a new position as Chef de Cabinet for Slovak Foreign Minister Jan Kubis. He said the OSCE plans to organize a regional conference on land degradation in late September in Tashkent, after the Uzbek Government indicated it wanted to host it. Also, he noted that the Uzbek Government remains opposed to a counterterrorism conference, which the OSCE had planned to organize until the Uzbeks canceled the project in late May. End summary.

JENCA TO LEAVE POST

¶2. (C) Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ambassador Miroslav Jenca told Charge on July 2 that he plans to leave the OSCE Project Coordinator Office in Tashkent in September to take up a new position as Chef de Cabinet for Slovak Foreign Minister Jan Kubis. Jenca is an official of the Slovak Foreign Ministry, but was seconded to the OSCE to serve as Head of Mission in Tashkent in February 2005. Kubis has previously served as the European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia. Jenca noted that he had already informed the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and the Uzbek Foreign Ministry of this impending move. He also said that the Slovak Government plans to propose another Slovak citizen to replace Jenca at the OSCE Mission, but he recognizes this is a competitive process and there may well be other candidates. He fears the selection process may drag on, or the Uzbek Government delay its approval, leaving OSCE without a head in Tashkent before/during/immediately after the expected December 23 presidential election. Jenca reminded Charge that something similar happened during the Uzbek December 2004 parliamentary election.

UPCOMING REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON LAND DEGRADATION

¶3. (C) Jenca also said that the Foreign Ministry had contacted him on June 28 to propose that Uzbekistan host a conference on land degradation issues in the second half of September. The conference would follow on an OSCE economic

forum recently held in Vienna. He said that the director of OSCE's economic office, Bernard Snoy, would work with the OSCE Mission in Tashkent to organize the conference, which would be hosted by the Uzbek Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Attendees would include counterparts from other Central Asian countries.

COUNTERTERRORISM CONFERENCE STILL OFF

¶4. (C) Finally, Jenca noted that the Uzbek Government remained opposed to a conference on counterterrorism, which the OSCE was to have organized in Tashkent. The Uzbek Government unilaterally canceled the conference at the end of May, characterizing its decision as a response to the EU decision to renew sanctions against Uzbekistan (reftel).

HANSON